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III. The *charts* of the first three Series measure, as has been said before, one degree in each direction, but the field that contains the faint stars below the 10th magnitude measures only one-half degree in each co-ordinate. The variable star is placed in the middle of the chart, and designated by a circle and a dot in the center, which correspond respectively to its maximum and minimum brightness. The identification of the variable was considered the most important point of the Atlas, and no chart is sent to the engraver before the variation of the star in the center has been established by actual observations. There is good ground for the hope that all errors of this kind have been avoided. The projection of the net is not optical, but artificial, the meridian lines being all parallel and the horizontal lines at equal distances from each other. The color of the net is red, and no letters are printed on the charts. Thus, in red light, which is found very agreeable to the eye when frequent changes from light to darkness are to be made, nothing appears on the chart except the black disks of the stars. This gives them the nearest resemblance to the sky, and facilitates recognizing the configuration.

The inscription of each chart is supposed to furnish everything necessary for the night work, while the catalogue gives other data useful for the computations.

The *Atlas* is published in Berlin, by Mr. FELIX L. DAMES (Voss Strasse, 32). It will be agreeable to your readers to learn that Miss CATHERINE WOLFE BRUCE, so well known for her many contributions to astronomical science, has placed in the hands of Professor EDWARD C. PICKERING a security of nearly two thousand dollars, which, while not covering the expense of engraving and printing of the whole Atlas, has encouraged the publisher to run the risk of this publication.

J. G. HAGEN, S. J.

GEORGETOWN COLLEGE OBSERVATORY, March 19, 1898.

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#### OBSERVATIONS OF $\alpha$ Ceti (*Mira*). 1897-98.

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BY ROSE O'HALLORAN.

The variable star  $\alpha$  Ceti attained a greater magnitude last November than during any of the recent years since the maxima commenced to occur in months when the constellation was not obscured by sunlight. Observations were taken of its rela-

tive brightness on eighty-six nights between September 29, 1897, and February 28, 1898; but to avoid repetition, only nights of marked change are mentioned.

September 29. Equal to adjacent star of eighth magnitude.

October 17. Equal to 66 *Ceti*.

October 23. Nearly equal to  $\xi$  *Piscium*.

October 26. Brighter than  $\xi$  *Piscium*.

November 3. Brighter than  $\delta$  *Ceti*.

November 10. Moonlight. For the first time since the maxima have occurred out of sunlight the variable is as bright as  $\gamma$  *Ceti*.

November 21. One-fourth of a magnitude brighter than  $\gamma$  when near meridian on a dark sky.

December 1. One-fourth brighter than  $\gamma$ . Moonlight. Clouds.

December 12. Equal to  $\gamma$ .

December 14. Not fully as bright as  $\gamma$  in a clear dark sky.

December 16. About one-fourth dimmer than  $\gamma$ .

December 21. Midway between  $\gamma$  and  $\delta$ .

December 31. Equal to  $\delta$ .

January 3. Not fully as bright as  $\delta$ .

January 7. Even in moonlight not as bright as  $\delta$ , which being a white star, pales in moonlight.

January 9. Same as  $\xi$  *Piscium*.

January 13. About one-third magnitude fainter than  $\xi$  *Piscium*.

January 19. Brighter than 66 and 70 *Ceti*, and equal to 75 *Ceti*.

January 24. Less than 75 in luster.

January 28. Equal to 70 *Ceti*.

February 4. In a hazy atmosphere seems brighter than 70.

February 12. The same as 71 *Ceti*.

February 19. Not as bright as 71.

February 28. Half a magnitude fainter than 71 *Ceti*. *Mira* was less than 7 magnitude on this date, when observations were discontinued.

SAN FRANCISCO, May, 1898.

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#### HONOR CONFERRED ON PROFESSOR SCHAEBERLE.

On commencement day, May 18, 1898, the University of California conferred the honorary degree of LL. D. upon Professor J. M. SCHAEBERLE.